



Bio information: **BENT KNEE**

Title: **SAY SO** (Cuneiform Rune 417) Format: CD / DIGITAL

RELEASE DATE: MAY 20, 2016

Cuneiform promotion dept: (301) 589-8894 / fax (301) 589-1819

email: joyce [-at-] cuneiformrecords.com (Press & world radio); radio [-at-] cuneiformrecords.com (North American & world radio)

www.cuneiformrecords.com

FILE UNDER: ROCK / INDIE / ART-ROCK / POP / AVANT-PROGRESSIVE

**For their Cuneiform Debut, Globally-Acclaimed Rockers  
- Bent Knee -  
Create *Say So*, a World-Class Album  
Brimming with Catchy, Captivating Songs  
That Channel the Best from Rock's Spectrum, from Pop to the Avant Garde**

*"Intricately woven, surrealist stylings... a potent sense of urgency tingles the air."* — *Consequence of Sound*

*"Emphatic crunch, a knack for complexity, mixed with lively wit"* — *The Boston Globe*

*"Vocals to die for, an interesting new turn at every corner and never a dull moment."* — Bill Bruford

*"...the new fantastic Bent Knee record [*Say So*]... Brilliant! This band will soon be everywhere!"* — Nik Bärtsch

**Bent Knee** is a band without frontiers. The Boston-based group seamlessly connects the worlds of rock, pop and the avant-garde into its own self-defining statement. On its Cuneiform debut release *Say So*, the band focuses on the sound of surprise. It's rock for the thinking person. The group's lyrics are dark and infused with themes focusing on the emergence of personal demons, unwanted situations and the difficulty of conquering them. Its mercurial sound matches its subject matter. It's a thrilling aural roller-coaster ride with arrangements designed to make listeners throw their arms up in wild abandon as they engage with them.

"*Say So* resoundingly demonstrates the increasing refinement and confidence of a group that doesn't quite fit any conventional pigeonhole, with emphatic crunch, a knack for complexity, mixed with lively wit," said Steve Smith of *The Boston Globe*. "Live, the band projects visceral glee, exactly harmonized and wholly infectious."

Founded in 2009, Bent Knee is a true collective. The band operates as a democratic entity with sky-high standards and a determination to push boundaries. Frontwoman and keyboardist **Courtney Swain's** acrobatic, multi-octave vocals are nothing less than extraordinary. Guitarist **Ben Levin** morphs between the hauntingly melodic and extreme, dissonant sonics—sometimes within a single verse or passage. Bassist **Jessica Kion** and drummer **Gavin Wallace-Ailsworth** deliver deep and thunderous grooves, full of engaging, intriguing ornamentation. Violinist **Chris Baum's** driving melodic overlays and atmospheres further take the band's sound into wild territory. And all of it is brilliantly processed and produced by sound designer **Vince Welch**.

Bent Knee has remained on a skyward trajectory since forming. Its last two albums, 2014's *Shiny Eyed Babies* and its self-titled 2011 release, have been celebrated as significant art-rock achievements by important music publications, including *Consequence of Sound*, *The Needle Drop*, *Innerviews*, and *Eclipsed*. The group has performed more than 300 shows across the U.S., Canada and Japan to date and will embark on its first European tour this year. They've also headlined at major festivals and venues including **The Lincoln Center**, **ROSfest**, **Tulsa Center of the Universe**, and **Campbell Bay Music Fest**.

"What Bent Knee does is fuse the most extreme ends of pop and avant-garde music together," says Welch. "We feel those things aren't nearly as mutually exclusive as most people think."

"When I listen back to *Say So*, I think it's the most accessible thing Bent Knee has ever done," continues Wallace-Ailsworth. "But other times, I think it's the strangest thing Bent Knee has ever done. For instance, '**Leak Water**' is a relatively linear rock tune by our standards, whereas '**Eve**' is a sprawling, epic with radical twists and turns. I think the album reflects the full spectrum of our diverse musical personalities."

Those extremes are also mirrored in the album's lyrical themes.

*[press release continued on verso]*

“On *Say So*, we’re looking at the bigger picture and figuring out where we as individuals stand and how we carve out meaning in this giant universe,” explains Baum. “The album art captures that idea too. It’s why it features a figure lost in the woods, surrounded by darkness but looking out into the light.”

Even with those signifiers and aims, the band prefers its lyrics to be wide open to interpretation. It feels both listeners and the group itself benefit from that perspective.

“I’ve had listeners come up to me and say ‘**Good Girl**’ from *Say So* is a strong statement against women being patronized or oppressed and that hit me really hard,” says Swain. “It’s possible to consider those lyrics in that context, and that perspective helped me connect even more closely with the song. How people perceive our songs helps enrich and refresh the pieces for us as we perform them over time.”

One of the elements that significantly distinguishes Bent Knee is its adventurous arrangements. Each track is a true journey. In fact, pieces like “**Eve**” and “**Counselor**” are so diverse they reflect an almost “songs-within-a-song” approach.

“We try not to repeat ourselves within our structures,” says Kion. “If we find we’re creating a pattern such as ramping into a loud section and landing in a soft section right after it twice in a row, we’ll break it as soon as we notice it. We don’t want to bore ourselves. We also want to surprise and intrigue listeners. We’re always trying to do new things with arrangements.”

“Another thing that stands out for us on *Say So* is that there are more dynamics within the sections of each piece,” adds Levin. “On previous albums, there were huge dynamic differences between sections. You’d hear songs that alternate between quiet passages, explosions, grooves, and long builds. On *Say So*, within a section, you’ll hear a lot more variety of loud and quiet, fullness and emptiness, ambience and dryness, and timbre changes. If you drew the dynamic arc of some of these pieces, it would look kind of like a Rorschach inkblot.”

Adding to *Say So*’s intrigue is the group’s decision to record some of the album in an unconventional space.

“A friend of ours pointed us to an empty, unlocked, million-square foot industrial complex in Boston,” says Baum. “We went in there to record so we could explore its unique sonic atmosphere. It felt like zombies were going to jump out anytime. It was a foreboding locale and gave the session a distinctly dark vibe. We captured some wild, reverb-drenched background vocals there.”

Prior to hitting the studio, the band road-tested *Say So*’s material at more than 50 gigs.

“It was extremely valuable to see how the pieces went over with audiences,” says Swain. “Playing live also gives all six of us a comprehensive understanding of where we sit in the registers of the songs, enabling us to adjust where the instruments fit in the mix. It’s also important for us to see how the lyrical motifs go over. The songs would be presented 70-80 percent finished to the audiences, leaving us with room to evolve the approach before finalizing them.”

*Say So* is a world-class album on every level. The band collectively obsessed over every detail in its determination to set a new standard for itself and the universe of ambitious songcraft.

“We now live in a time in which pretty much anyone in the Western world has access to the vast majority of recordings online,” says Welch. “So, the competition for musicians isn’t just the band down the street anymore. The competition is bands as big as **Radiohead**. To have a shot at success you have to aim to be that good. But even that’s not enough. You have to be patient and work at building up your audience like we’ve done for the last seven years. One of our mentors, the producer **Susan Rogers**, said to us ‘Slow growth is real growth.’ It’s advice we’ve taken to heart across this journey.”

That journey has now brought them into **Cuneiform**’s orbit—a transition the band is thrilled with on every level.

“It means a lot for us to be on Cuneiform because of the incredibly high standards of the other artists on the roster,” says Levin. “It’s a world where music is treated as art. Working with Cuneiform means we can make the music we love and connect with a lot of like-minded listeners. It’s fantastic to be in such great company, both in terms of the musicians they work with, as well as the uncompromising vision the label adheres to.”

*For more information on Bent Knee:*

[www.bentkneemusic.com](http://www.bentkneemusic.com) – [www.facebook.com/BentKneeMusic](https://www.facebook.com/BentKneeMusic) – [www.cuneiformrecords.com](http://www.cuneiformrecords.com) - twitter= @bentkneemusic

### **PROMOTIONAL PHOTOS**

Digital [High-Resolution] images are available on the Bent Knee artist page @ [www.cuneiformrecords.com](http://www.cuneiformrecords.com)

